

S E R M O N

P R E A C H E D I N

Christ - Church, DUBLIN;

Before the RIGHT HONOURABLE the

HOUSE of LORDS;

On MONDAY, the 23d of OCTOBER, 1769;

Being the ANNIVERSARY of the

Discovery of the IRISH REBELLION.

By the Right Reverend Father in GOD,
Tristram
 James, Lord Bishop of DOWN and CONNOR.

D U B L I N :

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Die Veneris, 3 Die Novembris, 1769.

IT is Ordered by the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, in Parliament assembled, That the Thanks of this House shall be, and are hereby given to the Lord Bishop of *Down and Connor*, for his Sermon preached before this House, on the 23d of *October* last, at *Christ-Church*; and his Lordship is hereby desired to print and publish the same; and that no Person do presume to print the said Sermon, but such as his Lordship shall Appoint.



Wm. Watts Gayer,

Edward Gayer,

Cler. Parliamentor.

2 TIM. I. 7.

*God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but---
of love.*

THOUGH the two grand religious establishments, which have been successively granted to mankind, the *mosaic* and the *christian*, both seem to contain the same general principles of faith and practice, to be adapted to the nature and constitution of man, and to promote the same important purposes of enlightening and reforming the world; yet, notwithstanding this similarity, their genius appears to be very different, and the respective and distinguishing principle of each seems to operate in a way peculiar to itself.

In the *mosaic* dispensation, though we sometimes meet with the most engaging representations of the Divinity, yet we are frequently struck with scenes of a very different aspect. God is often represented more like a master than a father; he seems rather to command than to invite, to dictate rather than to persuade: he is adorned indeed with majesty, but he is cloathed likewise with terror; and the manifestations which he gives of his power are such as inspire no less dread than wonder.

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The *christian* institution, on the other hand, places the Deity in the most amiable point of view; as compassionating the follies and the weaknesses of men; as redeeming them from a state of the most cruel and deplorable servitude; and as *reconciling the world to himself by Jesus Christ*.^{*} Men are engaged to their duty by the most pleasing, as well as by the most powerful motives: the love of God to man, and the love of men to God and to each other, are the essential characteristics, they are the first principles, and they are likewise the substance, the sum and the consummation of the gospel.

The respective styles of these two dispensations seem to confirm this observation; for in the *New Testament* we find that the whole of religion is most frequently expressed by what is naturally pleasing and amiable; by *the love of God and of our neighbour*; whereas in the *Old Testament* the phrase commonly is, *the fear of God; the fear of the Lord*; and this is repeated in so great a variety of instances, as if it encouraged and recommended our thinking of the Deity in that precise point of view.

Now, as there is but one God, and as he is permanent in his nature and attributes, surely the God of the *Hebrews* must be the same with the God of the *Christians*. Should not he therefore always appear adorned with the same characters of goodness and beneficence which we at present universally ascribe to the Divinity? should not the same feelings and affections always direct and animate the service which he requires from his rational creatures? yet certainly no feelings at first view appear more opposite and contradictory

* 2 Cor. v. 18, 19.

tory than love and fear ; nay, we are told by one apostle, that *we have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear* ;* and by another, that *there is no fear in love* ; but that *perfect love casteth out fear* ; because *fear hath torment* ; and that *he that feareth is not made perfect in love*.†

It shall therefore be the business of this discourse,

I. To explain the foundation and propriety of making these two affections of fear and love, the principal and respective sources of obedience in the *jewish* and *christian* dispensations. And,

II. To make such observations upon the subject, as may seem to be best adapted to this important and interesting occasion.

I. In the first place then we shall endeavour to explain the foundation and propriety of making fear and love the principal and respective sources of obedience in the *jewish* and *christian* dispensations.

Now one reason for the peculiar spirit of the *mosaic* institution may, I think, be drawn from the *jewish* character.

A long and dreadful famine, which afflicted the neighbouring countries, had induced the *Hebrews* to seek relief in *Egypt*. There they at first met with a most friendly reception, thro' the influence of *Joseph*, from whose services *Egypt* had reaped the most signal advantages : but after the death of this public benefactor, the *Hebrews* soon became the objects of the *Egyptians* contempt : they were reduced to the most vile servitude, and treated by their masters with the most barbarous and wanton severity.

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* Rom. viii. 15. See Gal v. 1. iv. 3, 4. Heb. xii. 18—24. † 1 John iv. 18.

By the long duration of this cruel slavery their minds became totally debased; their understandings were deprived of the advantages of knowledge and improvement; and the hardships which they underwent produced still worse effects upon their tempers. In short, they at last degenerated into mere slaves; and became an ignorant, cruel, stubborn and stiff-necked people. They had hardly an idea of any authority but of that of a task-master; and being incapable of noble and generous sentiments, they knew no other way of shewing spirit than that of rebellion.

There can be no stronger proof of the low state to which they were reduced, than their slavish adherence to the idolatry of their persecutors, after many endeavours had been employed to inspire them with more rational and more elevated sentiments. Reason, gentleness and insinuation were found to have no effect on the obstinacy of their tempers; even repeated miracles were unable to keep them steady in the belief of the unity of the God-head, which was one principal aim of the *mosaic* dispensation.

They were perpetually relapsing into the *Egyptian* superstitions; so obstinately perverse were they in this respect, that there was scarcely a god or an idol, in any country thro' which they passed, that they were not eager to adopt as a new object of adoration. Nay, at the very time that *Moses* was upon mount *Sinai*, in the midst of all the terrors and wonders which attended the promulgation of their law, they impoverished themselves, by giving up all their ear-rings and their gold, in order to make an idol similar to what they had seen worshipped in *Egypt*.

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The moment they tasted the joys of peace and prosperity, they rose in rebellion, and went in quest of new gods: and nothing less than a defeat, a famine, or a pestilence could open their minds to recollection, and impress upon them a sense of their apostacy. At last a cruel and tedious captivity of seventy years was found necessary to conquer effectually that extravagant passion which they had so long and so wantonly indulged for idolatry and superstition.

Now, if we attend to this peculiar character of the *jewish* nation; a character confirmed by almost every page of their history; we must, I think, evidently perceive the propriety, nay, the necessity of giving them a law armed with a multitude of terrors; the only one that was suitable to their tempers; and the only one that could secure the great end of the revelation which was granted them.

In the second place it may be observed, that the *mosaic* institution was presented to the *Jews* as a nation; their religion was blended with their polity; both together formed one uniform and connected system. As God alone was by that institution made the object of their worship, he became likewise their supreme magistrate; he was equally the head of their church and of their state; and the administration of all their civil as well as religious affairs was vested solely in him. This intimate union of religion and polity was to be the foundation of obedience, and the rule of conduct to every *Jew*, both in his private and public capacity: in this indeed consisted the peculiar genius of their establishment.

The laws and ordinances then, by which the *Jews* were from that period to be governed, must necessarily partake of the

the nature of the laws of other political establishments ; the spirit and genius of them must be of the same kind ; because, like them, they were addressed to a political body ; and the end of them was to preserve to that body the full enjoyment of its national and of its social, as well as of its religious privileges.

Now the force or spring of all national and political laws is founded on fear : it is the sanction alone that makes laws really such ; remove that, and what before was a law, assumes a new nature, and becomes only an advice ; and consequently loses all the force which essentially belongs to a law. Indeed such is the nature of society, that it cannot be otherwise.

Every man, who enters into society, gives up a part of his natural liberty ; and in return obtains a protection and security for his person, his property, his reputation, and the liberty that remains to him. The security of these privileges is the great object of the political union ; and therefore every infringement of them must, if possible, be prevented. For this reason laws will consist chiefly of prohibitions, and will operate by terror : they will punish ; but they cannot reward.

The external actions only of men are the objects of law ; they alone being fixed and determinate : but the merit of an action does not consist in the external act itself ; that is to be found only in the heart, in the dispositions, in the motives and intentions ; and these, being secret and invisible, are not cognisable by any human law whatsoever.

Now, with regard to punishments, the case is widely different ; for the prohibition of the law is not directed against the affection of the heart, the intentions or motives ;
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but against the very outward act itself: and these punishments will very naturally take place.

Upon this principle almost all the laws in the world are framed; they are generally in the form of prohibitions; they are of a penal nature; and consequently must operate by the way of terror. Thus the natural sanction of every law is fear; and indeed in the nature of the thing it can have no other.

Since then the *jewish* law was promulgated to an united body of men, and was to govern them as a nation; since the religious and political parts of it were so intimately connected as to make one regular and uniform system; and since the object of their worship was himself their legislator and supreme magistrate, and consequently preserved in his own hands the execution of the laws which regarded both their church and their state; the *mosaic* institution must necessarily resemble other national establishments; his laws must operate by terror; that is, by the dread of punishment.

Thus, *the fear of God, the fear of the Lord*, would become natural and common phrases, as best expressing the proper principle of civil and religious obedience united in one common point of view. Accordingly we find that, among the *Jews*, *the fear of the Lord*, signified the sum and substance both of their civil and of their religious duty; their duty to one another as men, and as fellow-citizens; and their duty to God as their supreme magistrate, and as the object of their worship; a being who is therefore represented as jealous of his honour, and tremendous in his anger.

In this point of view then every material circumstance which peculiarly affected the *jewish* nation unites; it shews clearly the foundation and propriety of making fear the principle of *jewish* obedience; and consequently displays the great wisdom of providence in having so well adapted a system of religious polity to so singular a people.

If we now turn our eyes to the *christian* dispensation; we shall behold a very different system of things; a system which ought to engage the greater attention, as it seems to have been entirely disregarded in various ages and nations, by many who have honoured themselves with the title of Christ's disciples.

Our Saviour himself appears to have been at great pains to guard us against error in this matter, and to explain to us the true spirit of his religion. He foresaw, no doubt, that the passions and prejudices of the world would be too apt to interfere in religious affairs; that blind zealots would be daring enough *to teach for doctrines the commandments of men, making the commandment of God of none effect by their traditions*;* and that the truth and beautiful simplicity of his gospel would be sullied and disguised, in order to accomplish the low and beggarly schemes of avarice, or the more daring and more dangerous projects of ambition.

Now, the *christian* institution, tho' it exerts its influence by enforcing every civil and political, as well as every religious duty, yet was never intended, like the *jewish*, to operate in any respect as a system of national law, or a mere rule of civil life. Our Saviour, at a very critical and interesting moment, peremptorily disclaimed all pretensions of that

* Mat. xv. 6, 9.

that sort. *My kingdom, says he, is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now is my kingdom not from hence.**

This institution then has nothing to do with polity, or with the schemes of politicians; though, to the disgrace of christians, it has been but too frequently connected with them. It was not to be confined to any particular nation, language or people: on the contrary, *the gospel was to be preached to every creature†*; it was to have human nature for its object; it was to embrace the permanent, the eternal interests of mankind.

Hence we find that it has all the marks and characteristics of an universal, moral, and religious establishment. It addresses itself to the hearts and consciences of men, as individuals; and therefore, tho' it likewise has its terrors, for *knowing the terrour of the Lord we persuade men;‡* yet its nature is of the soft, gentle and insinuating kind.

It is a comprehensive system of peace and love, which adopts all men into the same family; links them together by the affection of brethren; and unites them all in the service of Almighty God their common Father. Thus love, as has been already mentioned, must be both the first principle and the perfection of the religion of Jesus.

In this respect a *christian* is of no particular family or kindred; he is confined to no nation or country: he is in truth a citizen of the world; every individual of the human species is his neighbour, his kinsman and his brother.

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* John xviii. 36.

† Mark xvi. 15. Col. i. 23.

‡ 2 Cor. v. 11.

Our kind affections then are not to be circumscribed by mountains and rivers; nor interrupted by artificial divisions of land and water; they are not to be confined by family names or political distinctions; nay, not even by a difference of religious opinions and denominations.

*Which of the three, said our Saviour to the lawyer, was neighbour to the poor Jew who fell among the thieves?** Was it the priest or the levite, men of his own nation, and of the same religious persuasion? No; both of them *passed by on the other side*, regardless of his miseries. It was a stranger; a man of a different, nay, of a rival nation and religion; it was an *heretic* in the strictest sense of the word; in short, it was a *Samaritan*; a term that comprehended every thing which to a *Jew* was odious and detestable. Yet this man felt that his distressed enemy was his neighbour: our Saviour therefore presents to us his uncircumscribed benevolence as an object of imitation; *go, and do thou likewise.*

It is not sufficient that we do our neighbour no injury; the gospel prompts us to be active in his service, and to consider his interests as essentially connected with our own. It commands us in every thing that regards mankind to substitute ourselves in the place of others; and thus to make even our self-love the measure and standard of our benevolent and social affections.†

Nay, our holy religion requires us to cultivate this divine temper so universally, that our enemies and persecutors must not be excluded from its kind influences; they too must feel the effects of our benevolence.‡ Indeed, to speak
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* Luke x. 30—37.
Rom. xii. 21.

† Mat. vii. 12.

‡ Luke vi. 27—38. Mat. v. 43—48.

properly, a *christian* has no enemy; the world presents to him nothing but objects of domestic charity; his tongue must bless always; to it the faculty of cursing must be utterly unknown.* This is the doctrine of the *New Testament*; this is the character of a true disciple of Jesus.

For this reason charity is preferred to faith and to hope, and indeed to every spiritual gift. *Tho' a man, St. Paul tells us, was to speak with the tongues of men and of angels; tho' he had the gift of prophecy, and understood all mysteries and all knowledge; tho' he had all faith, so that he could even remove mountains; tho' he bestowed all his goods to feed the poor; nay tho', from an excess of generosity and public spirit, he gave his body to be burned; yet, without that noble, that extensive, that universal principle of benevolence, signified by the word charity, his tongues, his faith, his knowledge and his prophecy would avail him nothing; he would still be as deficient, with regard to the true spirit of christianity, as a piece of sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal, is defective in point of true musical expression; he would still be a stranger to the intrinsic excellence and real genius of the gospel.†*

Having thus attempted to explain the nature of fear and love, as being the respective sources of *jewish* and of *christian* obedience; I shall now proceed,

II. To make such observations on the subject, as seem to be best adapted to this important and interesting occasion.

Is this then the complexion of christianity? And can we avoid testifying our astonishment at the character and conduct of those who, in various ages of the church, have

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adopted

* 1 Cor. iv. 12. Rom. xii. 14.

† 1 Cor. xiii.

adopted principles of a contrary tendency? Who themselves abusing *that liberty, that perfect law of liberty, wherewith Christ hath made us free, would again entangle others with the yoke of bondage; putting a yoke upon our necks, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?**

Might we not with great propriety expostulate with such men in the words of *St. Paul*† *now, after that ye have known God---how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?* Do ye not perceive that *where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty?*‡

It is indeed a melancholy truth that christians, who above all others have boasted in the term catholic, have yet imbibed a narrower spirit, and have departed farther from that charity, which is the *royal law* § of the gospel, than any of the followers of Jesus. Arrogating to themselves the sole right of interpreting the divine oracles, they have presumed to anathematize all those who could not subscribe to their false or partial interpretations.

The secular arm is then most inhumanly commanded to finish what the church has begun; and thus, instead of *speaking the truth in love, and keeping the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace,*|| they have converted the christian world into a scene of blood and desolation; and thousands of harmless, nay of exemplary christians have been made victims, to gratify the ambition of priests, or the rage of zealots, who wanted to usurp a *lordship over God's heritage.*¶ Can any thing be more remote from the spirit of

* Gal. v. 1. James i. 25. Acts xv. 10.
§ James ii. 8.

|| Ephes. iv. 3, 15.

† Gal. iv. 9.

¶ 1 Pet. v. 3.

‡ 2 Cor. iii. 17.

of christianity? A religion which commands us *in meekness to instruct those that oppose themselves; to reprove, rebuke and exhort with all long-suffering; and to restore such as be overtaken in a fault, in the spirit of meekness.**

If love and meekness then must be employed in reclaiming from faults; how much more ought we to exercise the spirit of tenderness with regard to mere opinions? The arms of truth are reason, argument, mildness, candour and simplicity: by these alone can its interests be established and supported. Now, with truth and reason the arm of flesh has no sort of connexion; it is the natural and peculiar instrument of falsehood and error; and by these it is generally accompanied. The principle of their union is violence; and they terminate in blood.

The arms of the christian warfare, even against its worst enemies, are of a very different kind. *Stand therefore,* says *St. Paul,*† *having your loins girt about with truth; and having on the breast-plate of righteousness; and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, &c.* This is the armour which christianity employs to prevent or to suppress differences of opinion; and with this alone will its efforts be successful.

Let him then, who wishes to exterminate when he cannot persuade, and who feels himself prompted to employ fire and sword as means of conviction, remember these remarkable words of the same apostle; *Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth: yea, he shall be holden up; for God is able to make him stand.—Let every man be fully persuaded in his*
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* 2 Tim. ii. 25. iv. 2. Gal. vi. 1.

† Ephes. vi. 14.—18.

*own mind.** This is the language of Scripture ; indeed it is the language of common sense ; for conviction and love are the only bonds of union among men.

What sort of union has been produced among christians by extirpations and massacres, history and the nature of the thing may easily inform us. Have the perpetrators of them been able to remove the divisions which they have employed them to remedy or to prevent ? Have they been able to exterminate the doctrines as well as the bodies of the unhappy victims ? Instead of love, unanimity and confidence among men, have they not propagated suspicion, jealousy, and distrust ? And upon the friends and posterity of the sufferers have they not entailed rage, resentment and despair ? nay, have they not roused the generous indignation of unconnected spectators ; and by exciting, in favour of their dying brethren, the powerful workings of sympathy and compassion, augmented the number of those whom they wanted to destroy ?

This indeed is the common effect of religious persecutions ; so true is the maxim that *the blood of the martyrs is the fruitful seed of the church*. But if union could really be bought at such a price ; surely we ought to shudder at so dear and so dreadful a purchase.

This day's solemnity, my brethren, necessarily recalls to our thoughts a most deplorable instance of this exterminating spirit ; an instance which in some circumstances even surpasses the scenes of desolation, which have afflicted and disgraced other countries. The feebleness of age, the engaging innocence of infancy, and the insinuating softness and delicacy of female nature usually disarm even savages of their brutality : but in vain did they attempt to soften the en-

* Rom. xiv. 4, 5, 10. See James iv. 11, 12.

enthusiastic rage of our misguided bigots. All fell together without distinction, a shocking monument of the enormities of religious fury.

Humanity will not suffer me to recount the horrors of those unhappy times. It would make us blush for our species, to recollect the atrocious crimes of which religion has made them capable. We should be lost in wild astonishment to perceive that men could feel themselves prompted to commit the most flagrant, the most savage cruelties, by a religion which breathes nothing but universal love, tenderness and sympathy. We would gladly forget past instances of brutal ferocity, if we could obtain satisfaction that they will never be repeated; for it cannot surely be pleasing to us to record the disgraceful enormities of our deluded fellow-creatures and countrymen.

Charity bids us hope that the papists of the present times will never think of treading in the bloody footsteps of their forefathers: it bids us hope that they will sincerely join with us in detesting a series of the most atrocious murders resolved on without provocation; and, I am afraid, perpetrated without remorse: it bids us hope that a long experience of our lenity and moderation, in suspending the operation of those laws, which a principle of self-defence and the memory of recent cruelties extorted from us, may at length soften their minds into love, gratitude and confidence; and make them feel themselves to be men, fellow-citizens and fellow-christians with us their protestant brethren.

Too long, too long have they adhered to principles inconsistent with the genuine spirit of christianity; inconsistent with the fundamental laws of civil society. What room do they leave us for confidence, till they have utterly rejected

their principle of intolerance ? till they feel the obligation of keeping faith with those whom they brand with the name of heretics ; till they have shaken off their slavish dependence upon a foreign jurisdiction, so destructive of the good order of a state ; and which, we find, has so often been employed to subvert all lawful authority, and to fill nations with terrouir and desolation ?

Till they give us this reasonable security, can they be surprised that we are anxious about our preservation ? Can they be surprised that we wish to screen ourselves under the walls of our laws and constitution, against attempts that may still be made upon every thing that is dear to us, both as men and as christians ?

If they would follow the directions of *S. Paul* ;* *hast thou faith ? have it to thyself before God ; but judge not one another any more : and if they would acknowledge the authority of S. Peter, in these words ; giving all diligence to add to your faith, virtue ; and to virtue, knowledge ; and to knowlege, temperance ; and to temperance, patience ; and to patience, godliness ; and to godliness, brotherly kindness ; and to brotherly kindness, charity :†* if, I say, they would adopt these christian and truly catholic principles, and uniformly act upon them ; we should embrace them with arms of love and tenderness ; and our laws would become their security and defence ; for our most penal statutes can affect only the guilty ; and the uniform suspension of their effects is a proof that they were principally intended to protect the innocent.

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* Rom. xiv. 13, 22.

† 2 Pet. i. 5, 6.

Let it be observed that the intention of this solemnity is not to perpetuate divisions, but to reconcile differences; not to inflame, but to soften men's hearts: for while we express our sincere gratitude to almighty God for the happy deliverance which we annually commemorate, piety will naturally humanize the soul; it will melt us into tenderness; it will make us feel that our enemies were men; and that *charity is the end of the commandment.**

Inspired then with these generous and pious sentiments, let us on this occasion lift up our hearts unto the Lord with praise and thanksgiving. At the same time let it continue to be our earnest endeavour to maintain and to propagate this spirit of love, which so amiably characterises our holy religion, and which, we justly think, is the peculiar ornament of protestantism; let us never permit it to be sullied by rancour, malignity or uncharitableness; principles in themselves so unworthy, and so inconsistent with its true genius. Let not christians, in defence of its doctrines, act in contradiction to its precepts; nor, to promote faith, destroy that which alone renders faith meritorious. On the contrary, let us overpower and disarm our adversaries by the force of good example; for this is the most persuasive and most prevailing of all arguments.

Indeed the most effectual method of promoting, of defending, of honouring christianity is uniformly to feel the practical efficacy of its principles; that is, to lead a good life. He therefore who, by observing the rules which it prescribes, and by cultivating the dispositions which it recommends and inspires, renders it most amiable and most
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* 1 Tim. i. 5.

worthy of acceptance to others, is doubtless the soundest, the most orthodox, and the most catholic believer.

Who, says the apostle James, is a wise man, and endued with knowlege among you? Let him shew, out of a good conversation, his works with meekness of wisdom.—But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated; full of mercy and good fruits.*

To conclude; may this divine wisdom become universal among christians! May it become the governing principle of our lives! And may it put a happy and a speedy period to all the religious distinctions, which have so long disturbed the peace and happiness of our country. Let us pray then, according to the amiable spirit of this excellent collect in our liturgy;

Almighty God, who shewest to them that be in errour the light of thy truth, to the intent that they may return into the way of righteousness; grant unto all them that are admitted into the fellowship of Christ's religion, that they may eschew those things that are contrary to their profession, and follow all such things as are agreeable to the same; thro' our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

6 JY 53.

Now to God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, be ascribed all praise, dominion and honour; world without End. Amen.

* Ep. iii. 13, 17.

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